NPDB-HIPDB DATA BANK NEWS

National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HRSA
Health Resources and Services Administration

APRIL 2004

Data Banks Win 2004 Excellence.gov Award

The National Practitioner Data Bank - Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (NPDB-HIPDB) program was named an "Excellence.gov Top Five Award" finalist - the highest award given - in a ceremony at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C., on February 5, 2004. The awards are given to Federal organizations for their outstanding information technology (IT) achievements in the public service arena.

The Division of Practitioner Data Banks of the Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, administers the NPDB and HIPDB programs with the twin goals of improving the quality of health care in the U.S. and combating health care fraud and abuse.

Each generation of the NPDB-HIPDB system - from paper-based main frame processing in the early 1990s, through a client server architecture in the mid 1990s, to a modern Internet web-based architecture that came on-line in 1999 - has been developed to enhance the operations of the programs and best meet the needs of Data Bank users.

NPDB-HIPDB data is used with other primary source information to make determinations on licensing, certification, privileging, contracting, and employment decisions.

Excellence.gov was established to recognize the best practices in Federal Electronic Government (E-Gov) applications. It is sponsored by the Industry Advisory Council, the American Council for Technology, and the Federal CIO Council.

Building upon the President's Management Agenda's theme of "simplify and unify," this year's Excellence.gov Awards focused on governance models used in

See Data Banks Win Excellence.gov Top Five Award on page 8

HHS OIG Reaches Settlement with Hospital Accused of Violating NPDB Regulations

The HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently reached a monetary settlement in the amount of $10,000 with a hospital that was accused of violating the NPDB's confidentiality provisions (45 CFR part 60.13).

The OIG accused the hospital of improperly querying twice on a physician on which it was not entitled to query and disclosing confidential NPDB information about this physician to a former employee. The OIG also alleged that the hospital violated the NPDB regulations when it failed to update the original Adverse Action Report (AAR) it had submitted to the NPDB regarding this physician.

IQRS Query and Report History: Coming Soon!

IQRS enhancements, scheduled for June 2004 will allow entities to retrieve historical summaries of their queries and reports. Historical query summaries will provide entities with the query subject's name, date of query submitted, query status (completed, or rejected), query Data Bank Control Number (DCN), batch DCN, and the charge receipt (which indicates whether results were returned for the query). Historical report summaries will provide the report subject's name, date of report submitted, report status (completed or rejected), report DCN, report type (initial, correction, revision, or void), and current report status (active or inactive). If a report is currently in active status, then the entity will be able to click the report DCN link and view the report.

The new historical summary functionality design is based on entity recommendations from Data Bank user group meetings. IQRS users will be able to search for individual queries and reports submitted within a specified date range. The date range is limited to one-year increments within four years from the search date. Users also will be able to search historical organization queries or reports by a specific organization name within a specified date range. Beginning in June 2004, for detailed instructions, you may go to *www.npdb-hipdb.com* and click **Querying & Reporting** (in the General Information section).

SELECTING A QUERY HISTORY:

To select a historical query, log in to the IQRS and click **View Historical Queries** on the *Options* screen. **Note:** In order to obtain a report history, the user would click **View Historical Reports** on the *Options* screen and follow the on-screen instructions. The instructions that follow pertain to selecting a query history.

On the *Historical Query Selection* screen (Figure 1), complete the following steps:

Select Type of Subject

Select the appropriate radio button for an Individual or (HIPDB only) an Organization subject. To obtain a history on a particular subject, enter the individual or organization name in the appropriate field(s). To obtain a history on all individuals or organizations queried by your entity, leave the Name fields blank.

Select Date Range

Select the Submission Date Range in MMDDYYYY format. For example, to search all queries performed in 2003, enter "01012003" in the From field and "12312003" in the To field. The dates input in the From and To fields are included in the search.

To search all queries performed in the past four years, you will need to complete the search in one-year segments. To obtain the query history on a specific subject, the one-year increment does not apply, but the maximum date range cannot exceed four years from the search date.

Select Status

Select the appropriate radio button to receive only completed queries, only rejected queries, or both (to receive completed and rejected query histories). Then select **Continue** to process the historical query search.

The *Historical Query Summary* page will be displayed and may be printed for your reference. ⚕

Figure 1. On the Historical Query Selection screen, entity users can search for query histories submitted to the NPDB-HIPDB in the past by their entity.

Dear Data Banks...

Dear Data Banks answers questions you have about Data Bank policy and procedures. If you have a question about how the Data Banks work, please write to Dear Data Banks at P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832 or e-mail your question to Dear Data Banks at *npdb-hipdb@sra.com*. We look forward to hearing from you!

Question: What is the best way for new entity staff and newly registered entities to understand Data Bank policies and procedures?

Answer: The *National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) Guidebook* and the *Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) Guidebook* are the essential resources for NPDB-HIPDB policy and procedure information. To print copies of the guidebooks, go to the NPDB-HIPDB home page, located at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*, and click the link for the appropriate guidebook (on the left side of the home page, under the Publications section).

The guidebooks are divided into broad topical sections. You may print each section individually or print the entire guidebook. Each guidebook describes the relevant laws and regulations, defines eligibility requirements, and provides guidance on querying and reporting procedures and requirements.

Authorized users of the NPDB include State licensing boards; medical malpractice payers; hospitals and other health care entities; professional societies for purposes of peer review; and physicians, dentists, and other licensed health care practitioners (self-query only). Authorized users of the HIPDB include Federal or State Government agencies; health plans; practitioners, providers and suppliers (self-query only).

In addition to the guidebooks, the NPDB and HIPDB Interactive Training Programs are another tool for helping IQRS users to understand NPDB and HIPDB policy. To access the two interactive programs, click the Interactive Training link under the Quick List heading on the right side of the home page. The NPDB and HIPDB training programs answer the most frequently asked questions and explain the reporting process for each Data Bank. An interactive quiz for each Data Bank describes more than 50 scenarios about medical malpractice payments, adverse license actions, adverse clinical privilege actions, adverse membership actions, and exclusions; and identifies which actions are reportable to the Data Bank(s) and why. All NPDB and HIPDB users are encouraged to use the training programs.

Question: How do I ensure that my staff knows how to successfully navigate the IQRS?

Answer: On-screen instructions and help buttons are available to assist users in navigating the IQRS and in processing transactions. Detailed fact sheets are also available on a wide range of topics, ranging from policy guidance to step-by-step instructions for using on-line services. To download the fact sheets from the web site home page, click the Fact Sheets link under the Publications section, or go to *www.npdb-hipdb.com/factsheet.html*.

NPDB-HIPDB Information Specialists are available to answer additional questions from users about the Data Banks. Call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732. Information Specialists are available to speak with you weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (5:30 p.m. on Fridays) Eastern Time. The Customer Service Center is closed on all Federal holidays.

Question: A registered entity recently designated me as their authorized agent, but when I log in to the IQRS to submit a query for the entity, I am receiving an error message. Why can't I query for this entity?

Answer: If a registered entity has designated you to act as their authorized agent, your organization's administrator must log in to the IQRS and access the *Data Bank Correspondence* screen from the *Administrator Options* menu. The entity/agent relationship is not activated until the agent logs into the IQRS as the administrator and accepts the entity's designation. Once you have accepted, you should be able to begin querying on the entity's behalf.

The *Data Bank Correspondence* screen enables an authorized agent's administrator to electronically accept or decline an entity's Agent Designation Request to authorize an agent to query and/or report to the Data Bank(s) on its behalf. The Agent Designation Request will be available for the agent on-line for 30 days from the date it is opened and viewed. For more detailed information on authorized agents, see the *Fact Sheet for Authorized Submitters and Authorized Agents*, available at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*.

Introducing Subject Database Improvements!

There are some helpful features coming to your IQRS subject database this month. Be sure to take advantage of these new functionalities!

RESOLVE DUPLICATE SUBJECTS IN THE IQRS SUBJECT DATABASE

IQRS enhancements implemented in April 2004 allow you to resolve potential duplicate subjects in your subject database. When the IQRS detects a potential duplicate subject, the *Potential Duplicate Subjects* screen (Figure 2) will appear, warning you about the possible duplicate subject.

Figure 2. On the Potential Duplicate Subject(s) screen, you can resolve potential duplicate subjects that exist in your entity's subject database.

Helpful Hints From

AFTER CHANGING YOUR PASSWORD, REMEMBER TO LOG OFF!!
When prompted to change your IQRS password, please enter your new password, click **Save** and remember to log off and then log back in with your new password before you process any Data Bank transactions. If you don't save the new password before logging off and then log back in with your new password, your transactions will be rejected and you will receive an "invalid password" error message. You will also be locked out the next time you try to log in to the IQRS and will have to contact the Customer Service Center for assistance. For more information on Data Bank password procedures, go to the Data Bank home page, click the Fact Sheets link under the Publications section, and print a copy of the *Fact Sheet on User IDs and Passwords*.

CLICK TO VIEW QUERY RESPONSE INFORMATION
To view a completed query response (completed query responses are noted as "Completed" in the Status column of the Query Status screen), log in to the IQRS and click **Continue** on the *Entity Registration Confirmation* screen. On the *Options* screen, click **View Query Response** to view the *Query Status* screen. If your query status is Completed or Rejected, you may click the on-screen DCN to view your query results. Remember that your query response will remain in the IQRS for only 30 days after your query submission date.

LET PRACTITIONERS KNOW HOW TO SELF-QUERY THE DATA BANKS - CHECK OUT OUR NEW PRACTITIONER BROCHURE!
Please advise practitioners that they can request Data Bank information on themselves by performing a self-query. From the Data Bank home page, they can scroll to the right side of the screen under Quick List and then click the **Perform a Self-Query** link and follow the on-screen directions.

When you add subjects to your subject database on the *Maintain Individual (or Organization) Subject* screen, it is possible that those subjects already exist in your subject database. The *Potential Duplicate Subject(s)* screen appears when a potential duplicate is identified. At this point, you will have three options:

- Click **View Subject** for additional information on the subject already stored in the database to assist you in determining if the subject is indeed a duplicate and whether you wish to store the new subject.

- Store the new subject (even though the subject in question might be a duplicate).

- Decide not to store the new subject.

SORT YOUR SUBJECT DATABASE WITH EASE

You can sort subjects from your subject database in various ways. The sort feature is particularly helpful if you store large numbers of subjects in your subject database. You may sort by **Name**, **Department**, and by subjects that have been stored as **Complete**. By clicking **Complete**, you can ensure that all subject records are complete and ready to be queried on when you submit a query. Any incomplete subjects will display on-screen first, followed by all complete subjects. You will then be able to edit subjects that are stored as incomplete and correct the subject information.

Another new feature is the **Delete All** option, available on the *Import Subject s*creen, as well as the *Maintain Individual (or Organization) Subject* screen.

If you import subjects using third party software, you may find it useful to delete all subjects that are currently in your IQRS subject database before you import new subjects. Clicking **Delete All** will delete at one time all subjects appearing in the on-screen box.

Please use caution when using the new "Delete All" function: Once deleted, subjects are permanently removed from your IQRS subject database! ⚕

The Data Banks

The Data Banks recently published a new brochure that can help health care practitioners understand the Data Banks. In addition to explaining the function of the Data Banks, this new brochure, entitled "The Practitioner's Guide to the Data Banks: A Roadmap for Physicians, Dentists, and Other Health Care Practitioners," gives step-by-step instructions on how to submit a self-query to the Data Banks. You can find a link to the new brochure on-line at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*.

NEW ENTITIES MUST COMPLETE, SIGN, AND SUBMIT THEIR OWN *ENTITY REGISTRATION* FORM
When you register with the Data Banks as an entity, the registering organization must complete an on-line *Entity Registration* form that must be signed by the Certifying Official of your organization. An *Entity Registration* form completed by a third party will not be accepted. Registration information and forms are located at *www.npdb-hipdb.com/register.html*.

PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY INFORMATION WHEN YOU QUERY
When submitting a query, please enter complete and accurate information on the *Query Input* form. An accurate query response depends on the quality of the information that you give us in your query.

REPORTERS: HAD A CHANCE TO USE THE ENTITY INTERNAL REFERENCE FIELD YET?
The Entity Internal Reference field is an optional field that allows you to include an internal file or reference code (letters and/or numbers) to help you identify a report in your files. This information is not used by the Data Banks, but it will be recorded on the *Report Verification Document* that you retrieve from the IQRS. ⚕

Upcoming Data Bank Meetings

The Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) User Review Panel (URP) will meet on April 21, 2004, at the Sheraton Detroit Novi, in Novi, Michigan. The IQRS URP is a forum where IQRS users share information, discuss their ideas about Data Bank operations, and develop working relationships with the goal of improving the Data Banks. Feedback from these meetings has helped to create a number of enhancements to the IQRS, such as the Multi-Name Query Preference described on page 7 of this newsletter. The Data Banks are planning additional URP meetings to be held in conjunction with the National Association of Medical Staff Services (NAMSS) conference. Specific meeting times and sites for future URP meetings will be announced in the next issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*.

ANNUAL NAMSS CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 19-22, 2004

The annual NAMSS conference is scheduled for September 19-22, 2004, in Miami Beach, Florida. The NPDB-HIPDB will sponsor an information booth at the conference again this year. Be sure to visit us!

NPDB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, MAY 11, 2004

The NPDB Executive Committee will meet on May 11, 2004, at the Sheraton Crystal City, in Arlington, Virginia. The Committee meets twice a year with Data Bank staff. Member organizations include federations of licensing boards, professional societies, medical malpractice organizations, consumer groups, accrediting bodies, and other stakeholders. ⚕

NPDB Receives High Customer Satisfaction Rating

Your responses are in! In the October 2003 issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*, we asked you to complete a survey rating the NPDB. Queriers and reporters rated the NPDB highly on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) uniform, cross-industry quarterly index of private and public sector customer satisfaction.

The ACSI was adopted as the "gold standard" measure for Federal Government agencies in 1999 and it is internationally accepted and used in more than 20 countries. On a scale of 1 to 100, NPDB queriers (3,479 respondents) gave the NPDB an overall Customer Satisfaction Index score of 78. On the same scale, 1,675 surveyed NPDB reporters gave the NPDB an overall Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) score of 76. These scores for NPDB queriers and reporters are higher overall than the 2002 CSI score for the Federal Government, which is 71. The NPDB score ranks among the highest Federal agency scores, except for those agencies involved in direct payments of benefits.

The ACSI survey is conducted by the University of Michigan Business School's National Quality Research Center. It measures customer satisfaction in seven economic sectors, 35 industries, 190 companies, and Federal and local Government agencies.

The CSI scores were derived from user responses to three questions about overall satisfaction with the NPDB:
• How satisfied are you with the programs and services provided by the NPDB?

• To what extent have the programs and services provided by the NPDB met your expectations?

• How well do you think the NPDB compares with an ideal system of querying (and reporting)?

Many of those surveyed also found the NPDB convenient and easy to use, with a helpful staff that answered their questions. Specifically, queriers and reporters rated highly:

• Timeliness of query responses.

• Convenience of the payment method.

• Query information meeting their needs.

• Ease of using the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS).

• Ease of obtaining required information for reports.

• Helpfulness of NPDB staff in answering questions.

This June: Specify Your Preference for Responses to Multi-Name Queries

In June, a new section on the *User Account Information* screen (Figure 3) entitled Query Response Preference will allow users to specify how they wish to receive multi-name query responses. Bundling query responses can make it easier to view and print the results of large multi-name queries.

With the new functionality, entities can specify whether to:

1. NEVER bundle responses (receive a separate query response for each subject).

2. ALWAYS bundle responses (receive one query response containing all subject information).

3. Designate a number of subjects for which bundling will occur.

For instance, if the user specifies "only bundle query responses when querying on more than 10 subjects", then, on a query response for 10 subjects, the IQRS will generate 10 separate output response files - one file per subject. When the entity performs a query on 11 or more subjects, the system will generate one response file with all of the subjects bundled together.

How To Specify Your Query Response Preference

IQRS users may specify or change their multi-name query preference at any time. To change your multi-name query preference:

• Log in to the IQRS.

• Click **Continue** on the *Entity Registration Confirmation* screen.

• On the *Options* screen, click **Update User Account**.

• At the bottom of the *User Account Information* screen, follow the on-screen instructions and specify your query response preference. ⚕

Figure 3. On the User Account Information screen, specify your query response preference. You can update this information at any time.

Customer Satisfaction Rating
from page 6

The NPDB is working on several improvements that address some of the survey's specific results, such as the level of customer satisfaction with guidance and regulations. Some of the changes include working on improving the *NPDB Guidebook* and preparing additional information materials to clarify guidance to queriers and reporters.

Thank you for your feedback! ⚕

Data Banks Win 2004 Excellence.gov Award from page 1

E-Government projects that cross organizational boundaries.

A panel of judges composed of representatives from government and industry picked this year's finalists, using criteria such as demonstration of measurable results, degree of project innovation, and impact on the agency's ability to deliver on its mission.

The success of the NPDB-HIPDB program comes from knowing the customers and their needs, continually communicating and welcoming customer involvement, and taking advantage of advancing technologies. The Data Banks continue to improve the system and make it more responsive to the customers' needs. This program is a model for E-Gov that is serving business, Federal and State Government, and citizens. The NPDB-HIPDB governance process has been highly successful and serves as a model and best practice for others to use.

For more information about the NPDB-HIPDB, visit the program's site at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*. ⚕

On the Horizon

NEW SUBJECT DATABASE FORMAT OPTION DUE IN SEPTEMBER

In September, IQRS users will be able to import a subject database using XML file format or the current fixed-width file format.

The XML format will offer new and enhanced capabilities, allowing IQRS users to import organization subjects; to add, edit, or delete subject information and to add a unique subject ID number for your entity's records. Additional information about the new XML file format will be available in the next issue of *NPDB-HIPDB Data Bank News*. ⚕

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